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Amanda



by

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NEW YORK William Morrow and Company 1941

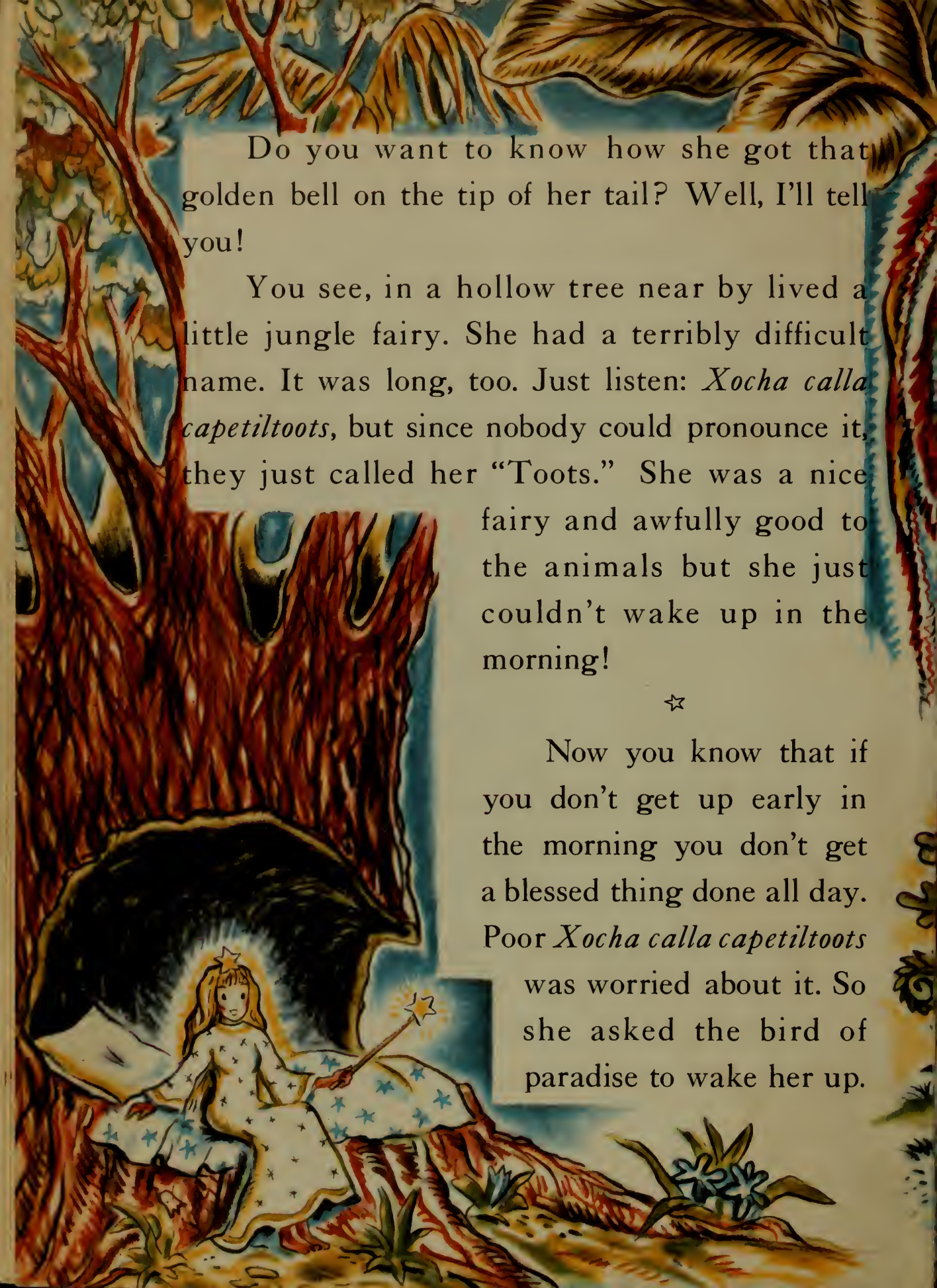
To
Lidi-Jean
and
Erhard

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Now this is the story of Amanda, the kind little snake who lived near the edge of the green jungle, beneath a beautiful, flowering tree.

She was very pretty. Just look at her with that perky ribbon in her hair, and her necklace, and polka-dots and that beautiful golden bell on the tip of her tail!

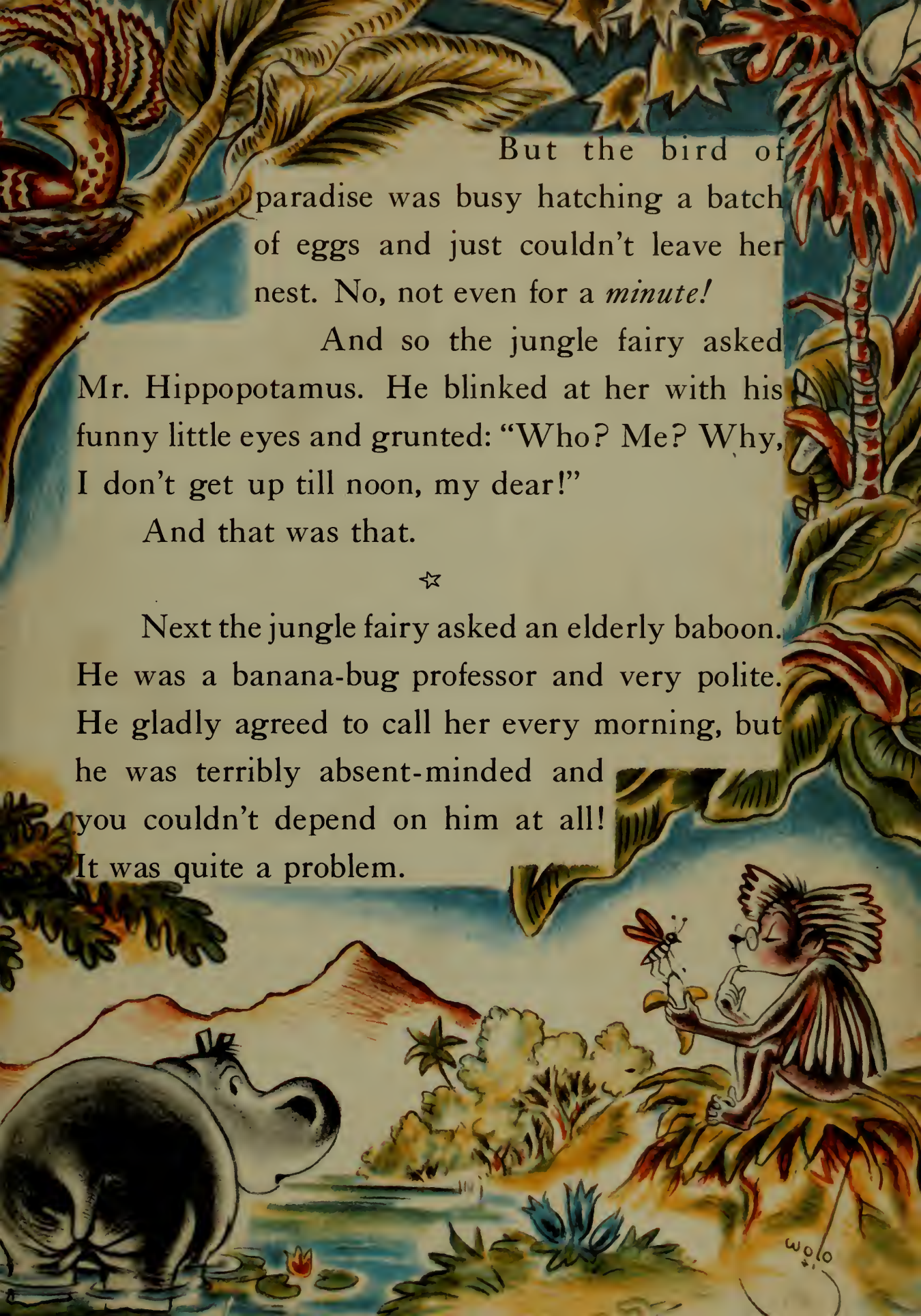


Do you want to know how she got that golden bell on the tip of her tail? Well, I'll tell you!

You see, in a hollow tree near by lived a little jungle fairy. She had a terribly difficult name. It was long, too. Just listen: *Xocha calla capetiltoots*, but since nobody could pronounce it, they just called her "Toots." She was a nice fairy and awfully good to the animals but she just couldn't wake up in the morning!



Now you know that if you don't get up early in the morning you don't get a blessed thing done all day. Poor *Xocha calla capetiltoots* was worried about it. So she asked the bird of paradise to wake her up.



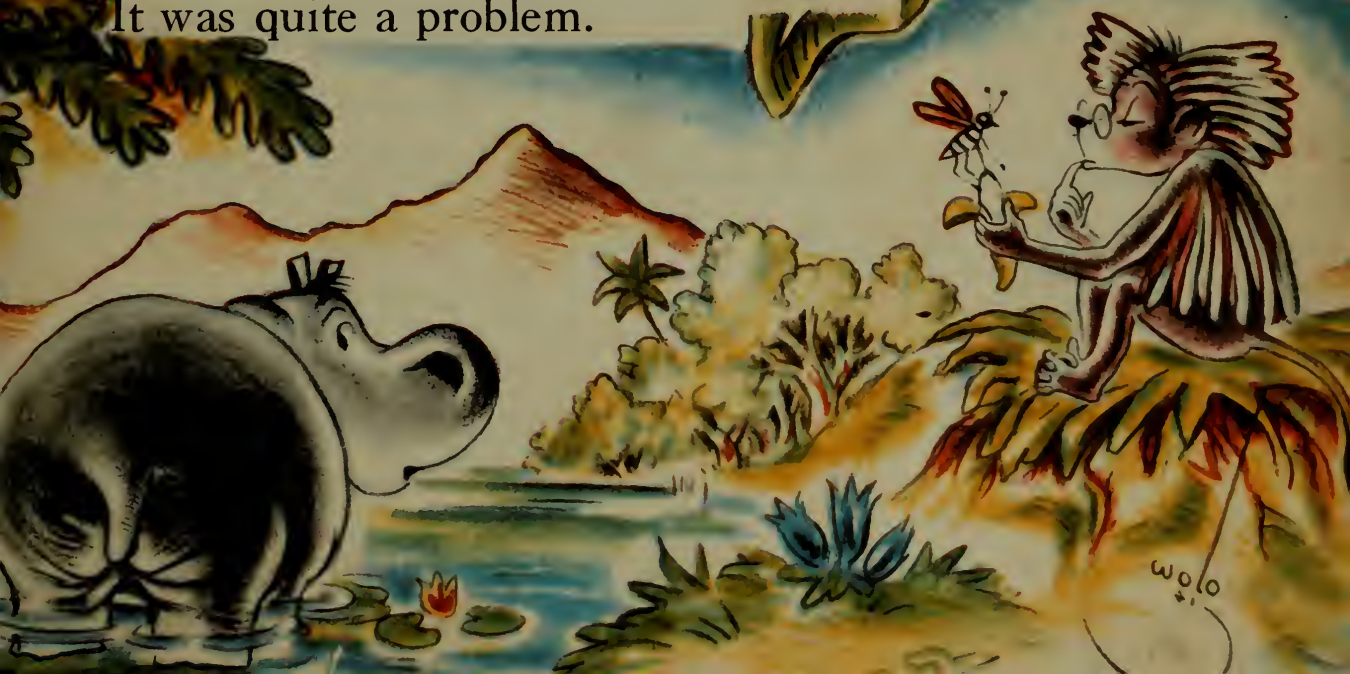
But the bird of paradise was busy hatching a batch of eggs and just couldn't leave her nest. No, not even for a *minute*!

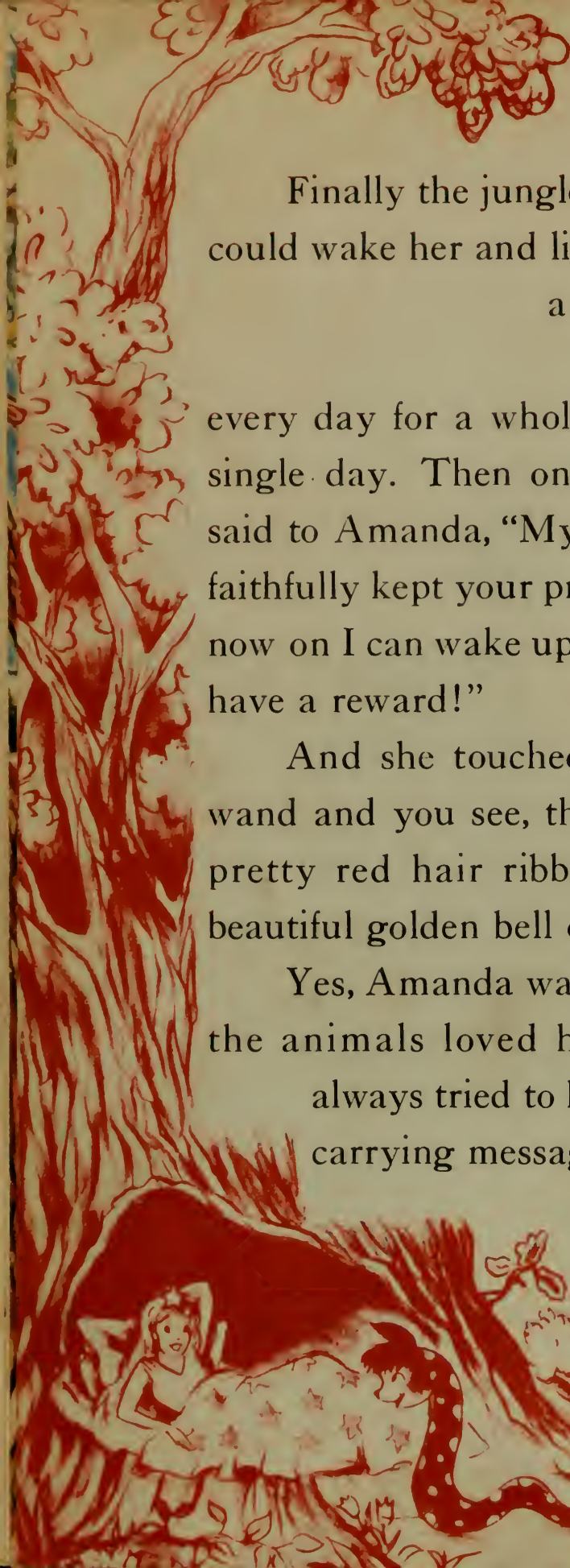
And so the jungle fairy asked Mr. Hippopotamus. He blinked at her with his funny little eyes and grunted: "Who? Me? Why, I don't get up till noon, my dear!"

And that was that.



Next the jungle fairy asked an elderly baboon. He was a banana-bug professor and very polite. He gladly agreed to call her every morning, but he was terribly absent-minded and you couldn't depend on him at all! It was quite a problem.





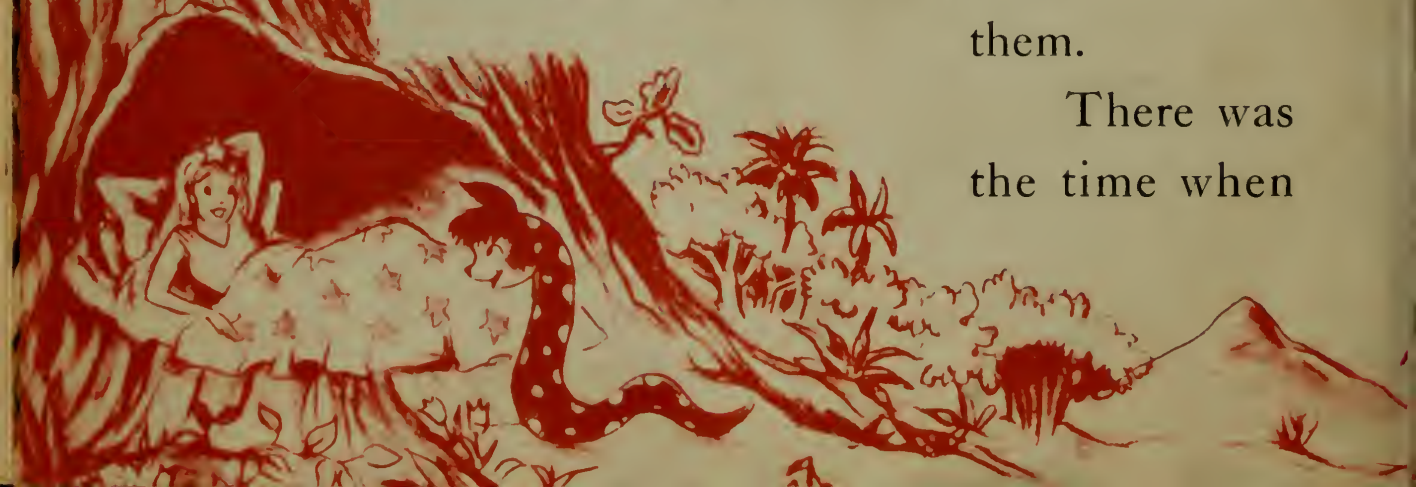
Finally the jungle fairy asked Amanda if she could wake her and little Amanda said she could, and she would

and she *did*— every day for a whole month without missing a single day. Then one morning the jungle fairy said to Amanda, “My dear little snake, you have faithfully kept your promise and I think that from now on I can wake up all by myself, but you shall have a reward!”

And she touched Amanda with her magic wand and you see, that is how Amanda got her pretty red hair ribbon and necklace and that beautiful golden bell on the tip of her tail!

Yes, Amanda was a good little snake and all the animals loved her, for she was kind, and always tried to help! Besides, she was always carrying messages and running errands for them.

There was the time when



Miss Hippo dropped her engagement ring into a deep hole. Amanda got it back for her!

And once a big storm nearly blew away Mrs. Cockatoo's nest with four little ones in it. Amanda saved it.

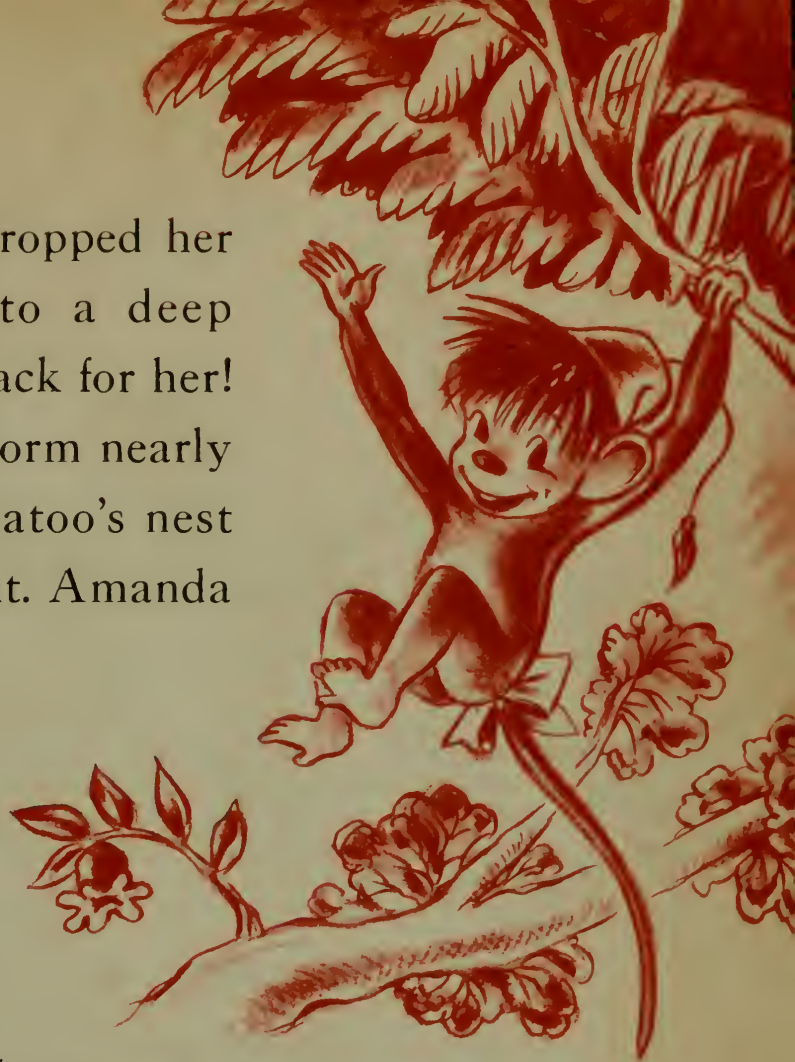
No wonder she had so many friends and they all loved her.

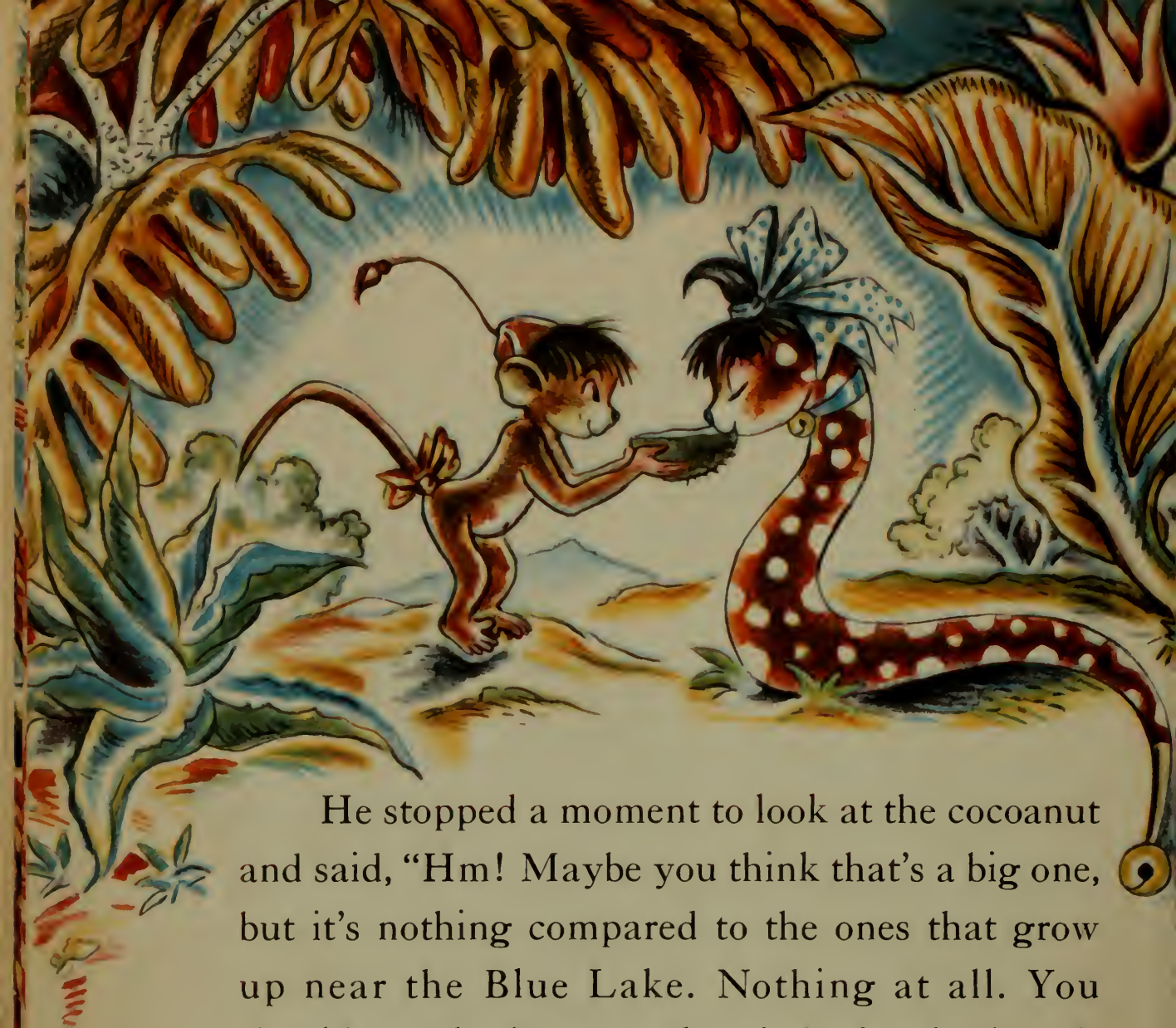
But her best friend was a little monkey.

His name was *Sir Archibald!*

They were always together. In fact, Sir Archibald lived in the little flowering tree above Amanda's place.

Now one morning Sir Archibald wanted to surprise Amanda. So he plucked her the biggest cocoanut he could find and was just giving her a taste when a snooty little bush pig walked by.



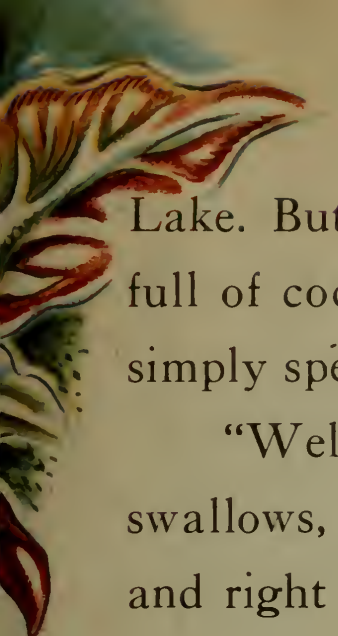


He stopped a moment to look at the cocoanut and said, "Hm! Maybe you think that's a big one, but it's nothing compared to the ones that grow up near the Blue Lake. Nothing at all. You should see the bananas there! As for the bread-

buttered!"

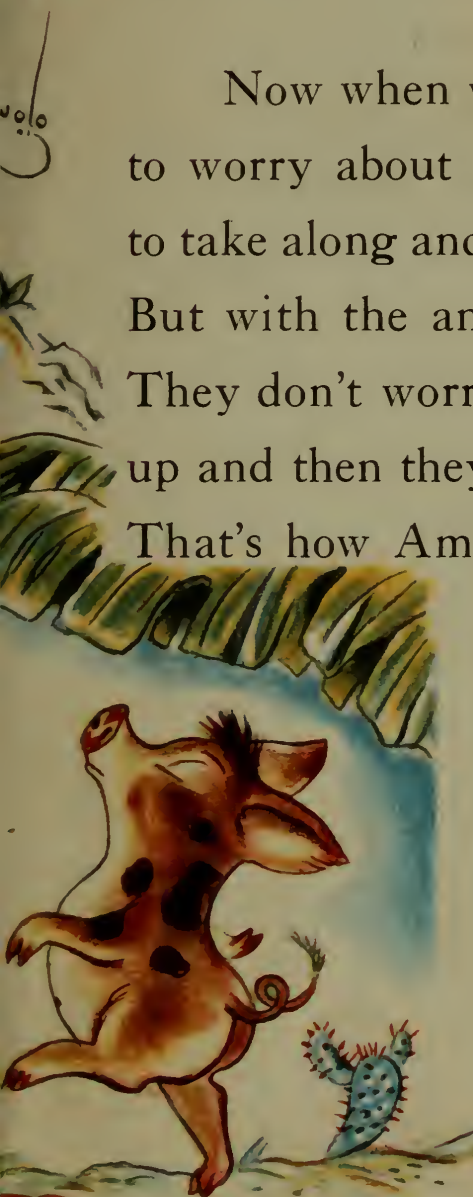
With that he waddled on, as snooty and as huffy as could be!

It was too bad, because they had wanted to ask the little bush pig how to get to the Blue



Lake. But you see, Sir Archibald had his mouth full of cocoanut—and as for Amanda, she was simply speechless!

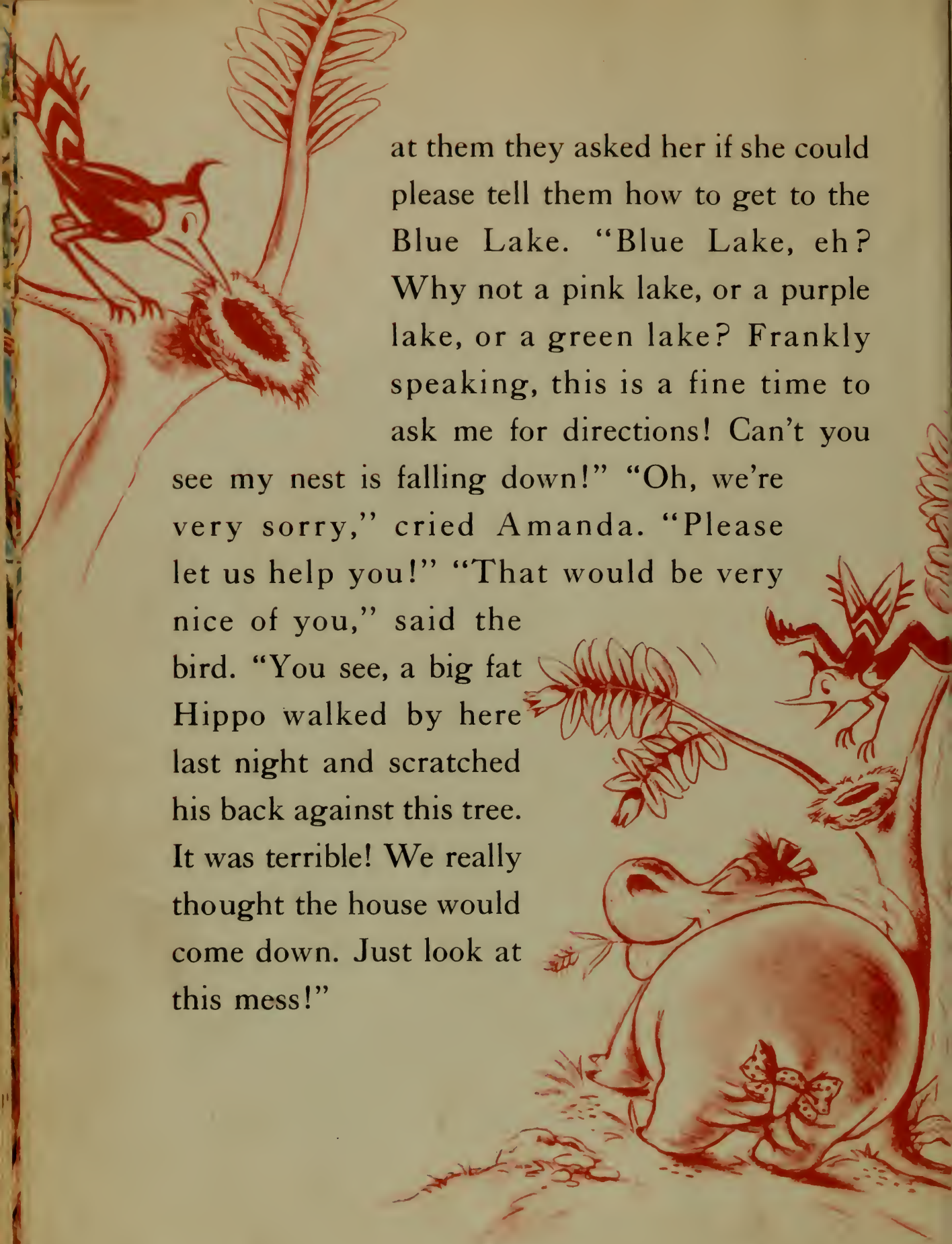
“Well,” said Sir Archibald, after several hard swallows, “maybe we are missing something!” and right then they both decided to travel to the
Blue Lake!



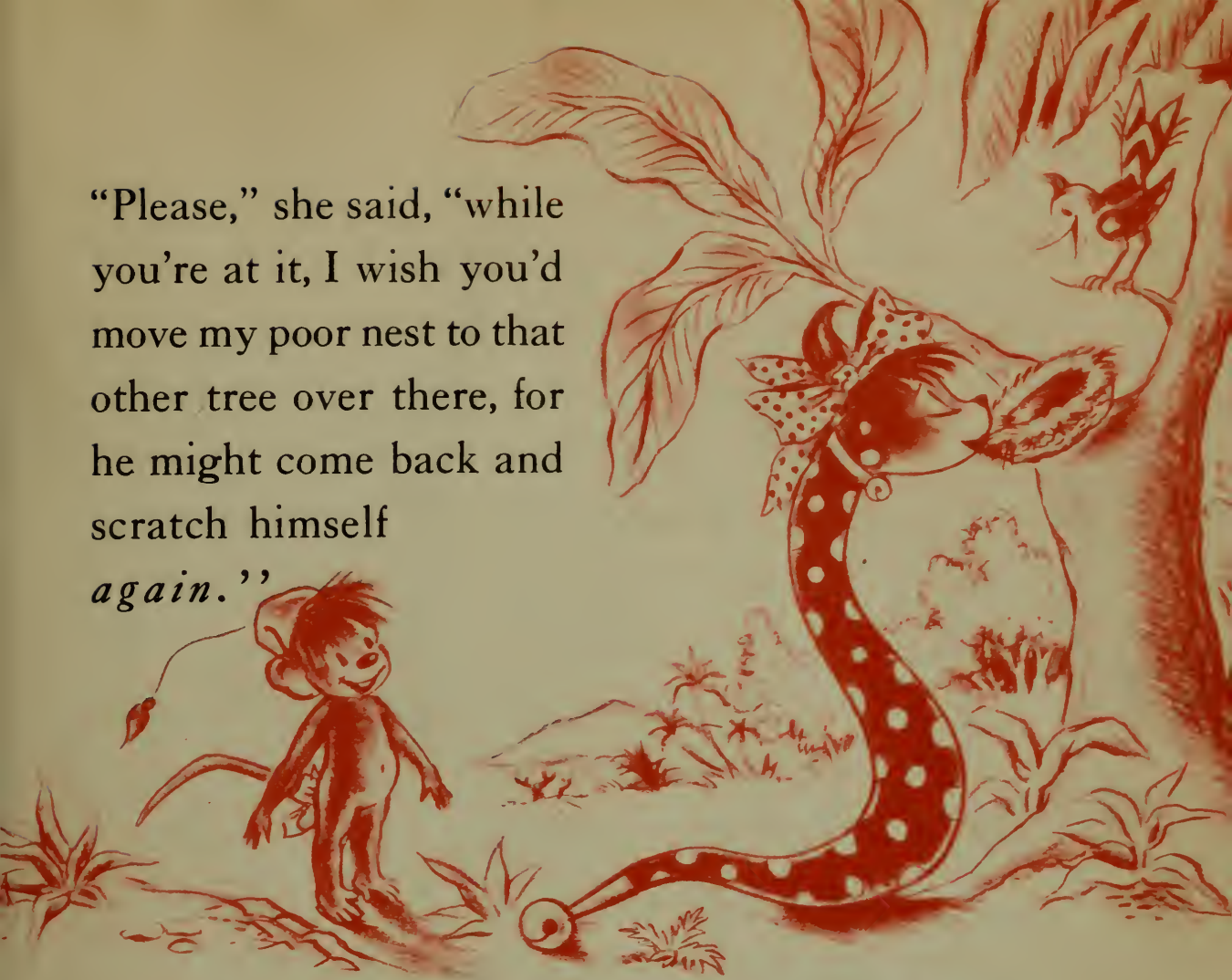
Now when we go on a trip it's quite a thing to worry about tickets and suit-cases and what to take along and when to leave and what to wear. But with the animals it's all very, very simple. They don't worry about anything. They just get up and then they're on their way. It's wonderful! That's how Amanda and Sir Archibald started on the journey to the Blue Lake!

They had not gone very far when they came upon a worried-looking bird. She was busy pulling on a lopsided nest and when she turned around to look

at them they asked her if she could please tell them how to get to the Blue Lake. "Blue Lake, eh? Why not a pink lake, or a purple lake, or a green lake? Frankly speaking, this is a fine time to ask me for directions! Can't you see my nest is falling down!" "Oh, we're very sorry," cried Amanda. "Please let us help you!" "That would be very nice of you," said the bird. "You see, a big fat Hippo walked by here last night and scratched his back against this tree. It was terrible! We really thought the house would come down. Just look at this mess!"



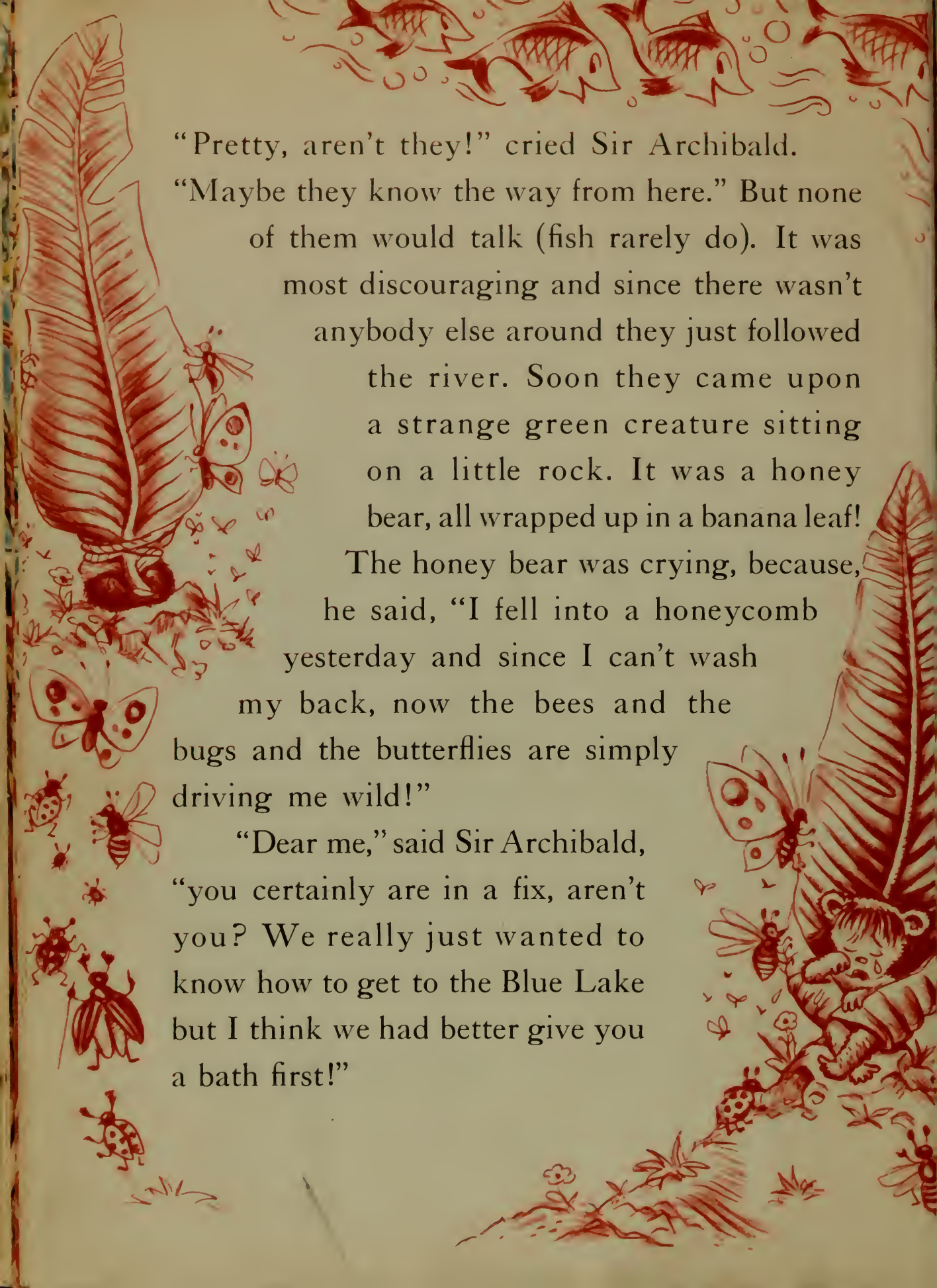
“Please,” she said, “while you’re at it, I wish you’d move my poor nest to that other tree over there, for he might come back and scratch himself *again.*”



“Why certainly,” said Amanda, and after they had helped the little bird she gratefully showed them the way to the Blue Lake.

“Just go straight through there,” she said, “till you come to a river full of red fish. From there on you’ll have to ask somebody else, ’cause that’s all I know!”

And that’s how they got to the river full of red fish.

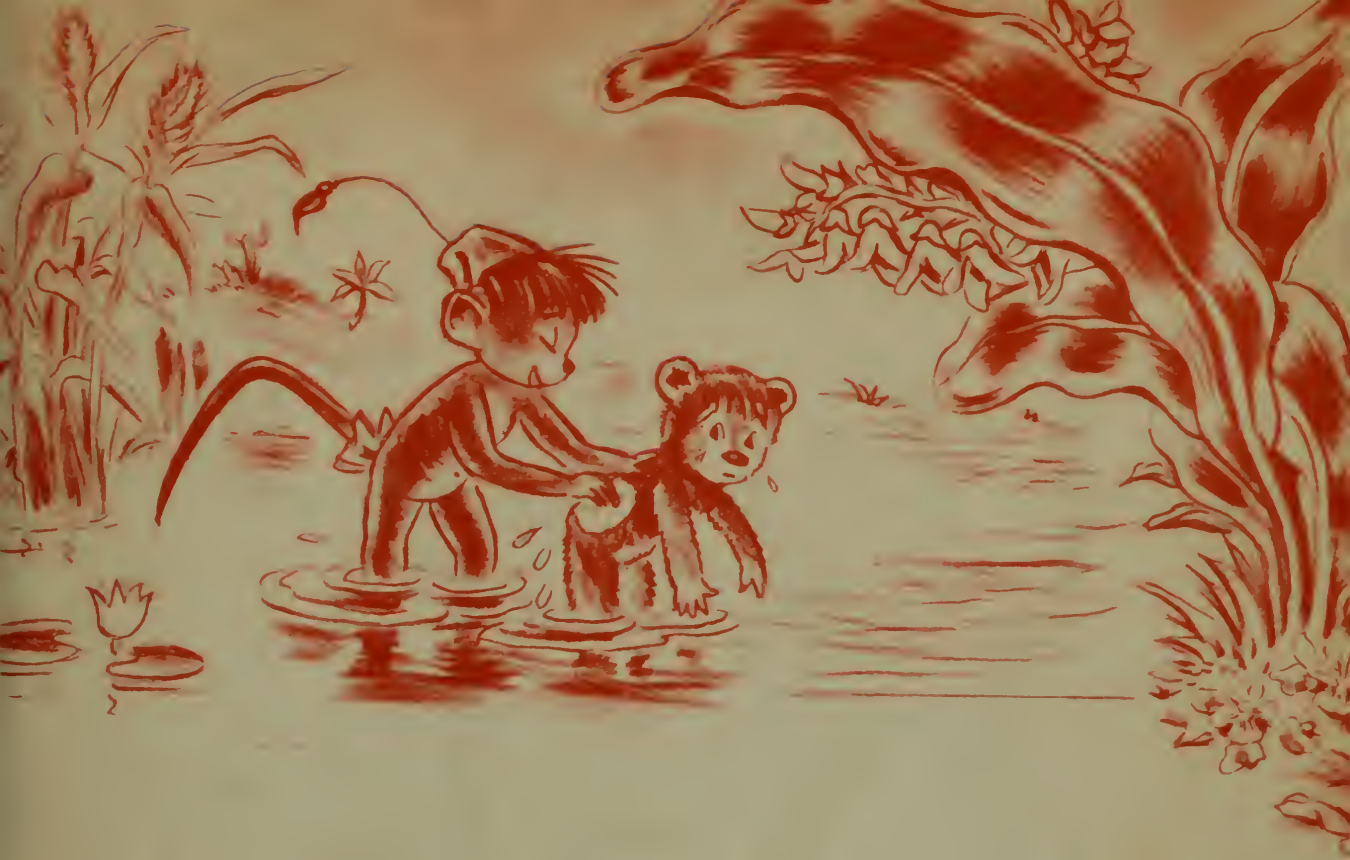


“Pretty, aren’t they!” cried Sir Archibald.

“Maybe they know the way from here.” But none of them would talk (fish rarely do). It was most discouraging and since there wasn’t anybody else around they just followed the river. Soon they came upon a strange green creature sitting on a little rock. It was a honey bear, all wrapped up in a banana leaf!

The honey bear was crying, because, he said, “I fell into a honeycomb yesterday and since I can’t wash my back, now the bees and the bugs and the butterflies are simply driving me wild!”

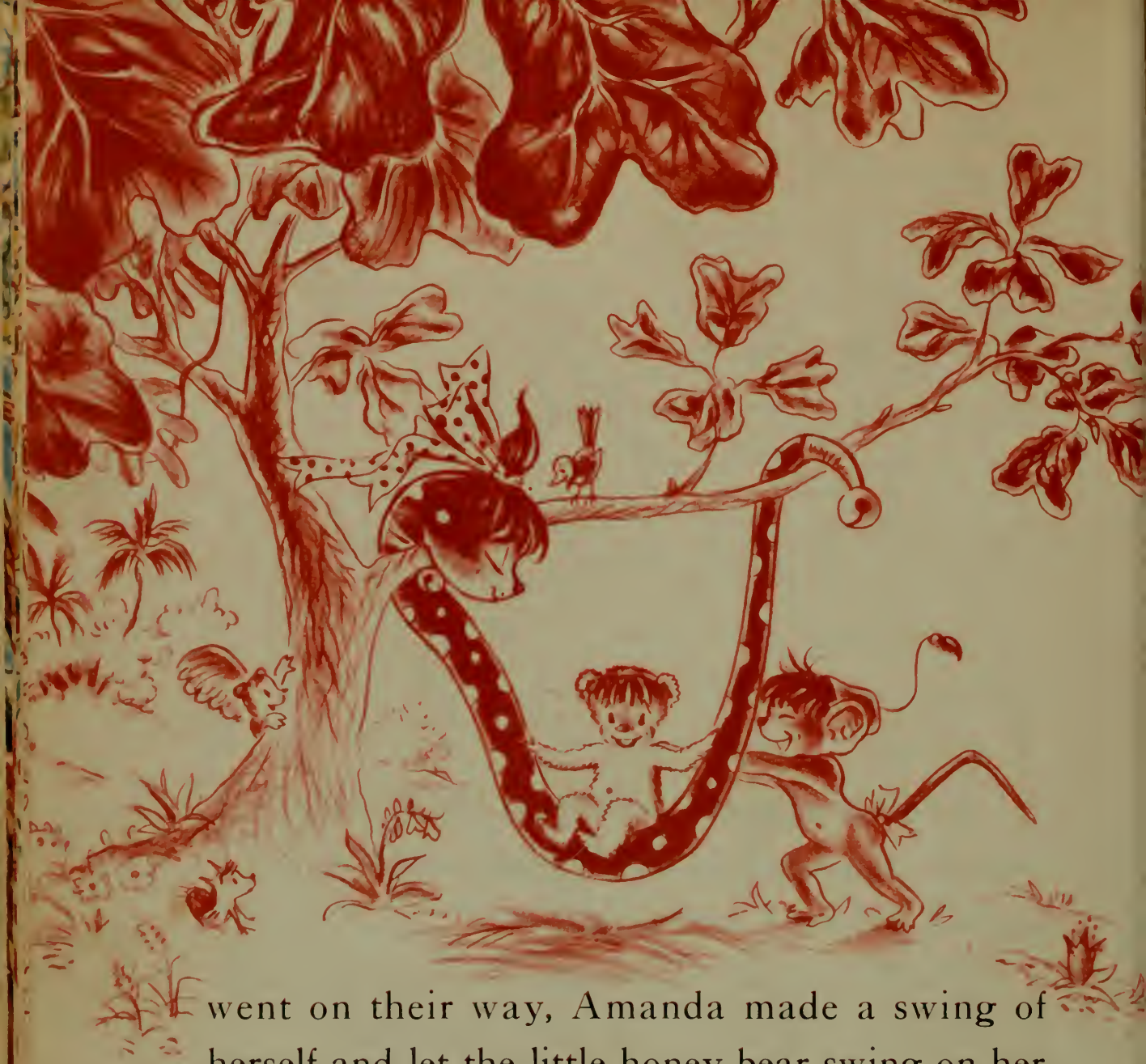
“Dear me,” said Sir Archibald, “you certainly are in a fix, aren’t you? We really just wanted to know how to get to the Blue Lake but I think we had better give you a bath first!”



So Sir Archibald peeled off the banana leaf and took the honey bear to the river and scrubbed his back till his fur glistened!

The honey bear was much relieved and gratefully showed them the way to the Blue Lake. That is, as far as he knew it. "Just follow the river," he said, "until you come to a big yucca tree. There are two white monkeys there. You'd better ask them, they might know!"

Sir Archibald thanked him, but before they



went on their way, Amanda made a swing of herself and let the little honey bear swing on her and he had so much fun—why, he'd never had as good a time in all his life!

That's how Amanda and Sir Archibald came to the big yucca tree. Oh, it was beautiful—in full bloom—and just beyond was a big, lazy river.

On the shore of that river they saw two white monkeys, throwing pebbles into the water.

“Hi there!” shouted Sir Archibald, “could you tell us the way to the Blue Lake?”

“—please?” added Amanda.



The monkeys came over but they were very bashful and just looked and looked, first at Sir Archibald and then at Amanda’s golden bell.

“I’ll give you a nice ride through the water if you’ll tell us,” said Amanda.

“Really?” said the monkeys.

“You bet!” said Sir Archibald. “She’s the nicest, most wonderful little snake in all the jungle!”



So Amanda gave them a wonderful ride!

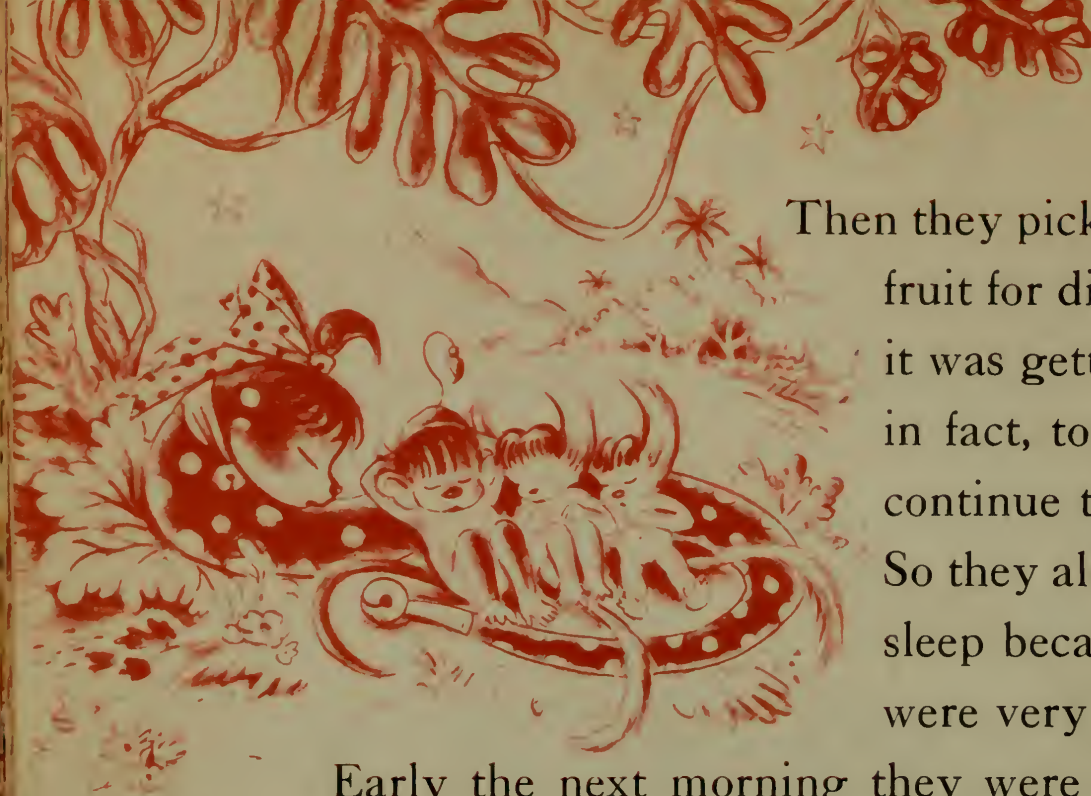




Afterwards she let them all slide down her back into the water, for Amanda liked nothing better than to make others happy. She was a good little snake!

Of course they all got very wet and so they dried themselves in the warm sun. Sir Archibald combed Amanda's bangs and fixed her ribbon, and the two little white monkeys shined up her golden bell till it sparkled!





Then they picked some fruit for dinner, for it was getting late, in fact, too late to continue that day. So they all went to sleep because they were very tired.

Early the next morning they were on their way again. The two little monkeys went with them for some time to show them the road. "Just keep on going till you come to the hollow log that lies across the little river. That's all we know," said the white monkeys. "From there on you'll have to ask somebody else."

Now when Amanda and Sir Archibald came to the second river they looked around for the hollow log across it, but there wasn't any to be found. Instead they came upon a mother skunk with five baby skunks sitting on the river bank and looking most woebegone!

“Oh dear! Oh dear!” sighed Mother Skunk. “We simply have to get across the river. There used to be a hollow log here but this morning a silly wart hog walked over it. He just wanted to show off, you know. And when he got to the middle, the log broke ’cause he was much too heavy for it. The big oaf! The whole business fell into the water and floated away! Oh dear! Oh dear!” she sighed. “I’d swim across it myself but my babies mustn’t get their little feet wet. They might catch cold. Oh dear! Oh dear!”



“Well, well,” said Amanda, “we simply must do something about this,” and . . .





Just look how she helped them!
Now wasn't that sweet of Amanda?

So the little skunks got safely across the river and Mother Skunk gratefully told Amanda and Sir Archibald how to go the rest of the way—straight ahead into the valley beyond the twin mountain peaks.

So that's how they got to the twin mountain peaks. It was windy up there, and cold—brrrr!—but they didn't care, for down in the valley they could see the little Blue Lake!

Of course they were both very happy. Sir Archibald could hardly wait to see the great big cocoanuts the huffy little bush pig had told them about, and the huge bananas, and most of all the *buttered breadfruit!*

"Imagine!" he said to Amanda, "we'll just put it in the hot sun and—bingo! we'll have buttered toast and cocoanut milk! Won't that taste good! You know—maybe I'll make you a Banana Custard!"

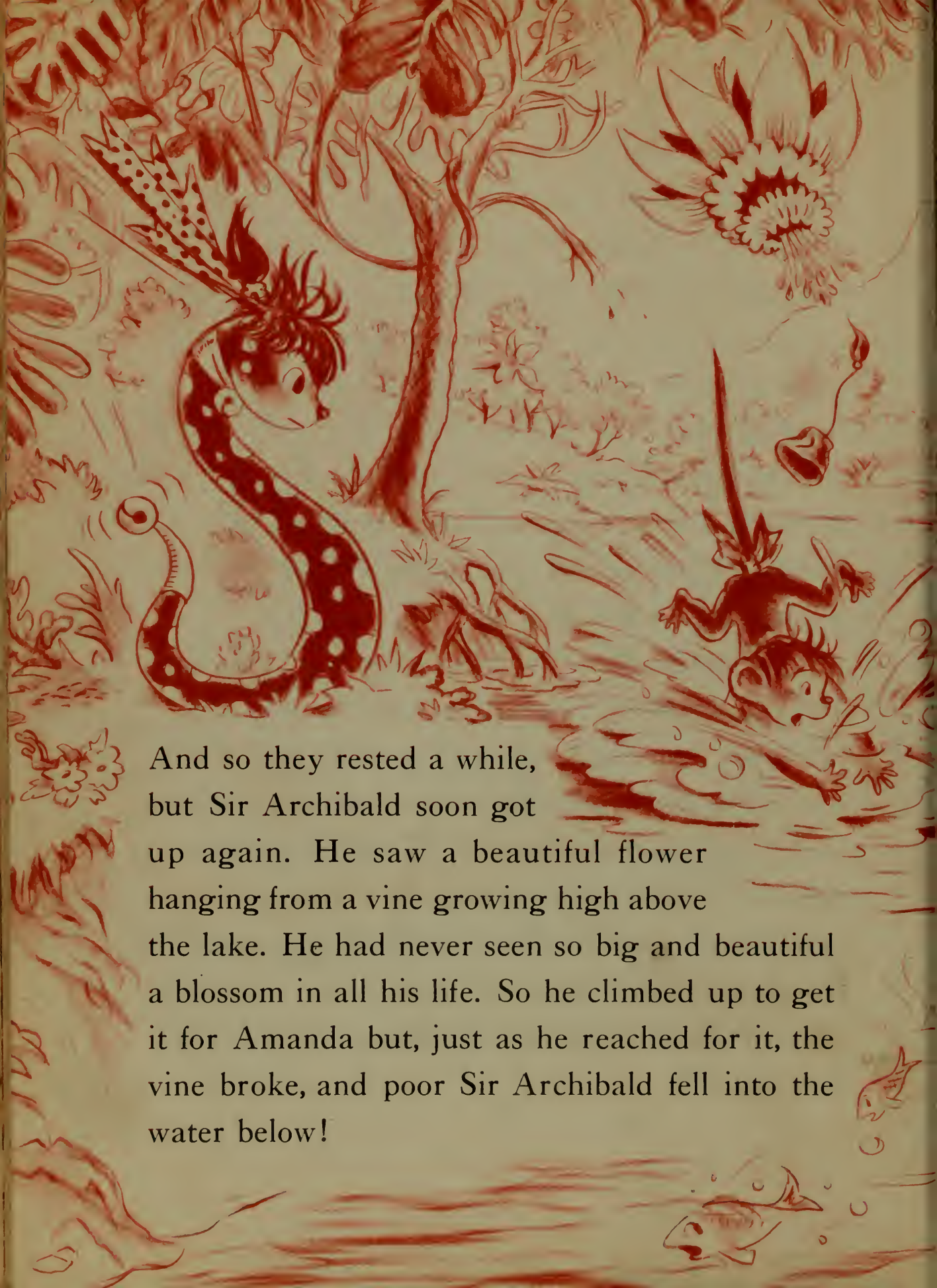
Alas! Alas! When they finally arrived at the lake things were quite different from what the snooty bush pig had told them! The cocoanuts weren't any bigger than the ones back home and the bananas not half as nice. As for the breadfruit trees—why, *they didn't find one!*



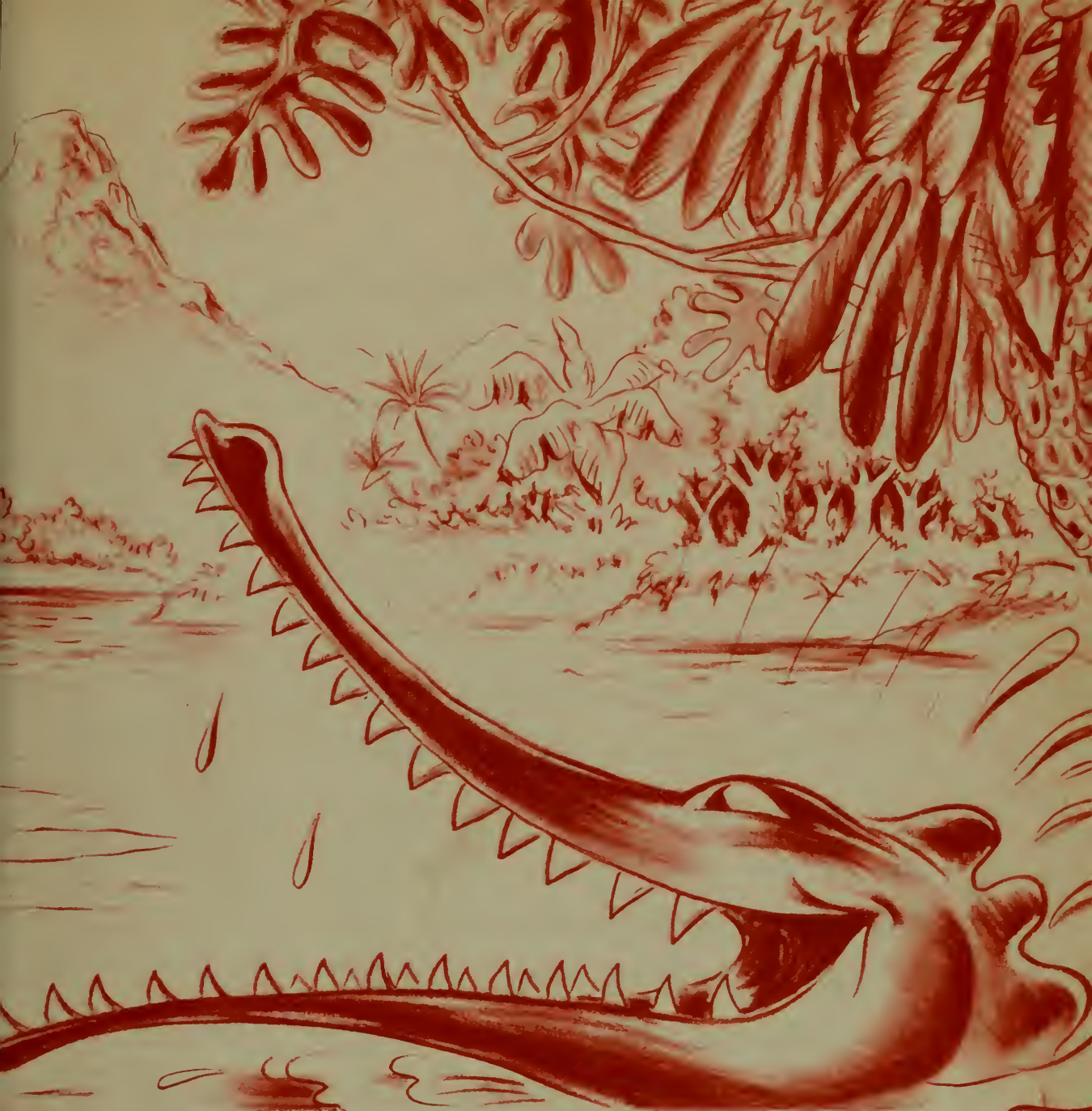
Not only that, the place was full of briars and prickly thistles, and the animals there wouldn't even speak to them.

"Now isn't that just like some people—always telling others how wonderful things are in some other place!" said Amanda.

"Hm," grumbled Sir Archibald, "personally I think that bush pig deserves a good spanking for telling us all those fibs! Just wait till I see him again!"

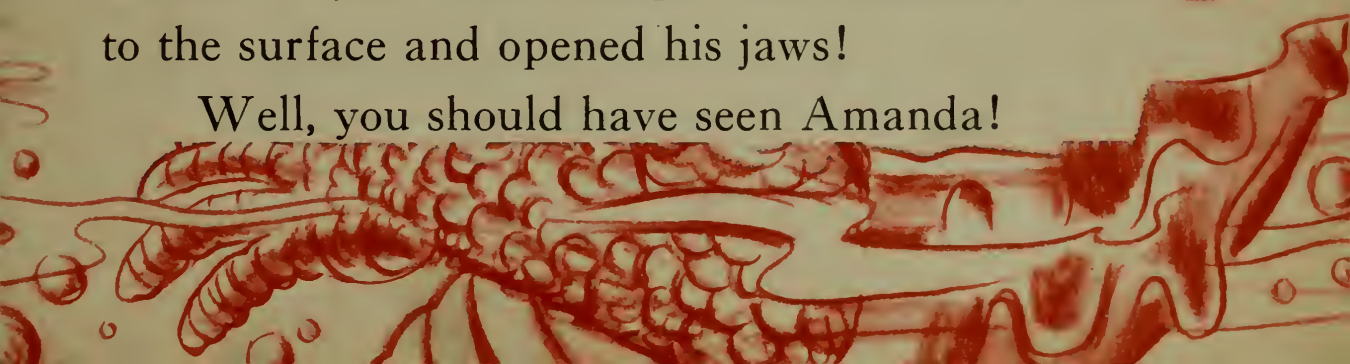


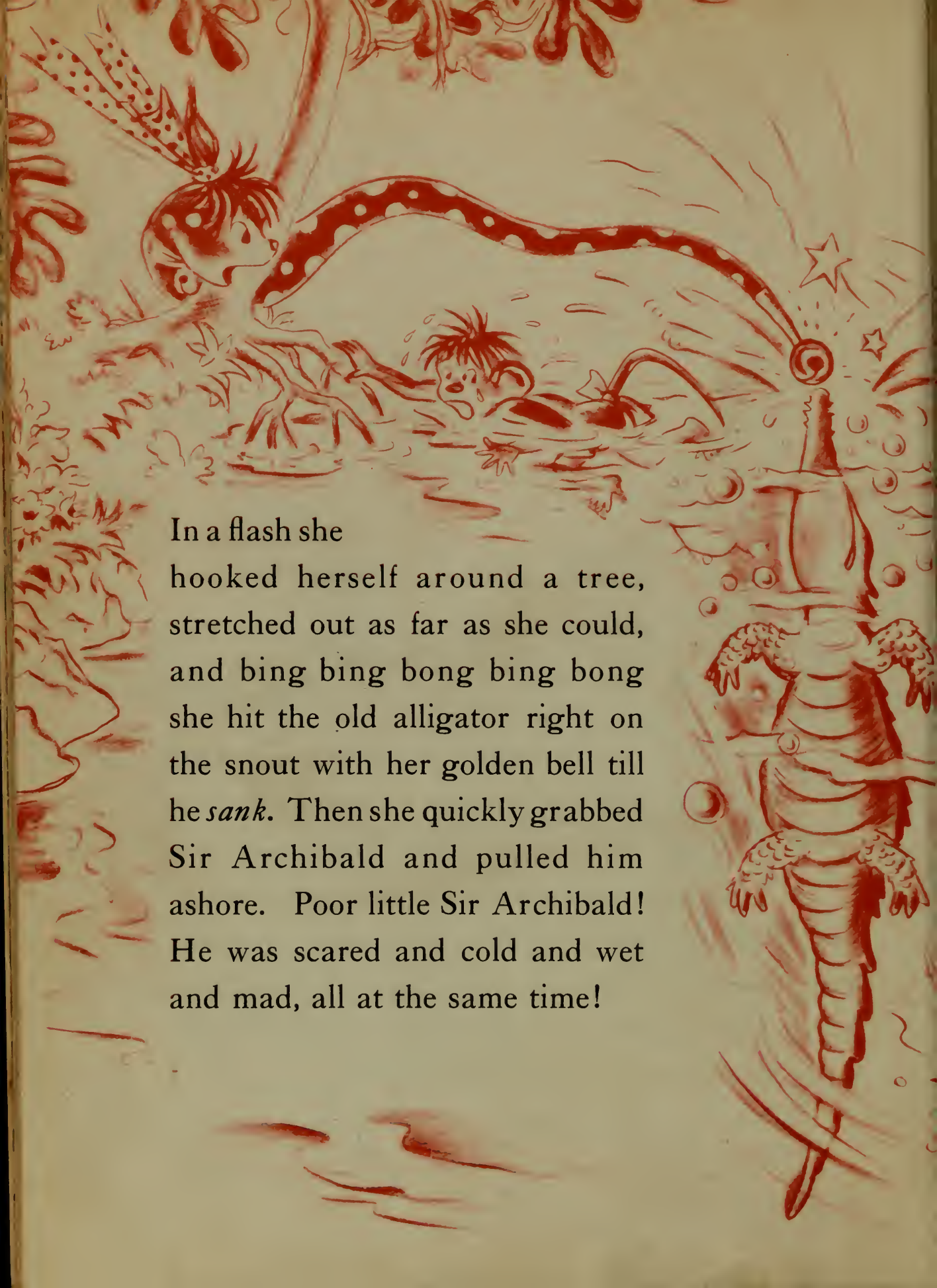
And so they rested a while,
but Sir Archibald soon got
up again. He saw a beautiful flower
hanging from a vine growing high above
the lake. He had never seen so big and beautiful
a blossom in all his life. So he climbed up to get
it for Amanda but, just as he reached for it, the
vine broke, and poor Sir Archibald fell into the
water below!



He made such a loud splash that Amanda woke up with a start. It was a good thing, for—heavens!—just then a huge black alligator rose to the surface and opened his jaws!

Well, you should have seen Amanda!





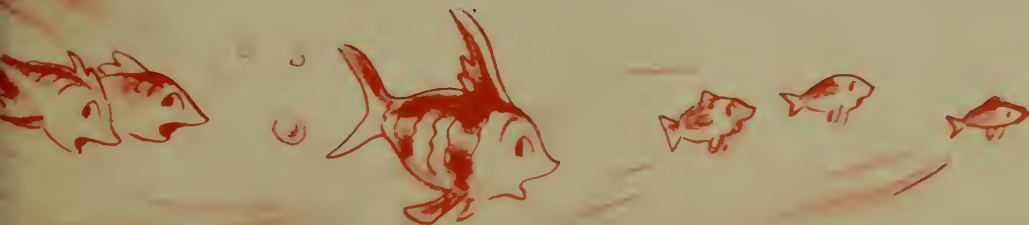
In a flash she
hooked herself around a tree,
stretched out as far as she could,
and bing bing bong bing bong
she hit the old alligator right on
the snout with her golden bell till
he *sank*. Then she quickly grabbed
Sir Archibald and pulled him
ashore. Poor little Sir Archibald!
He was scared and cold and wet
and mad, all at the same time!

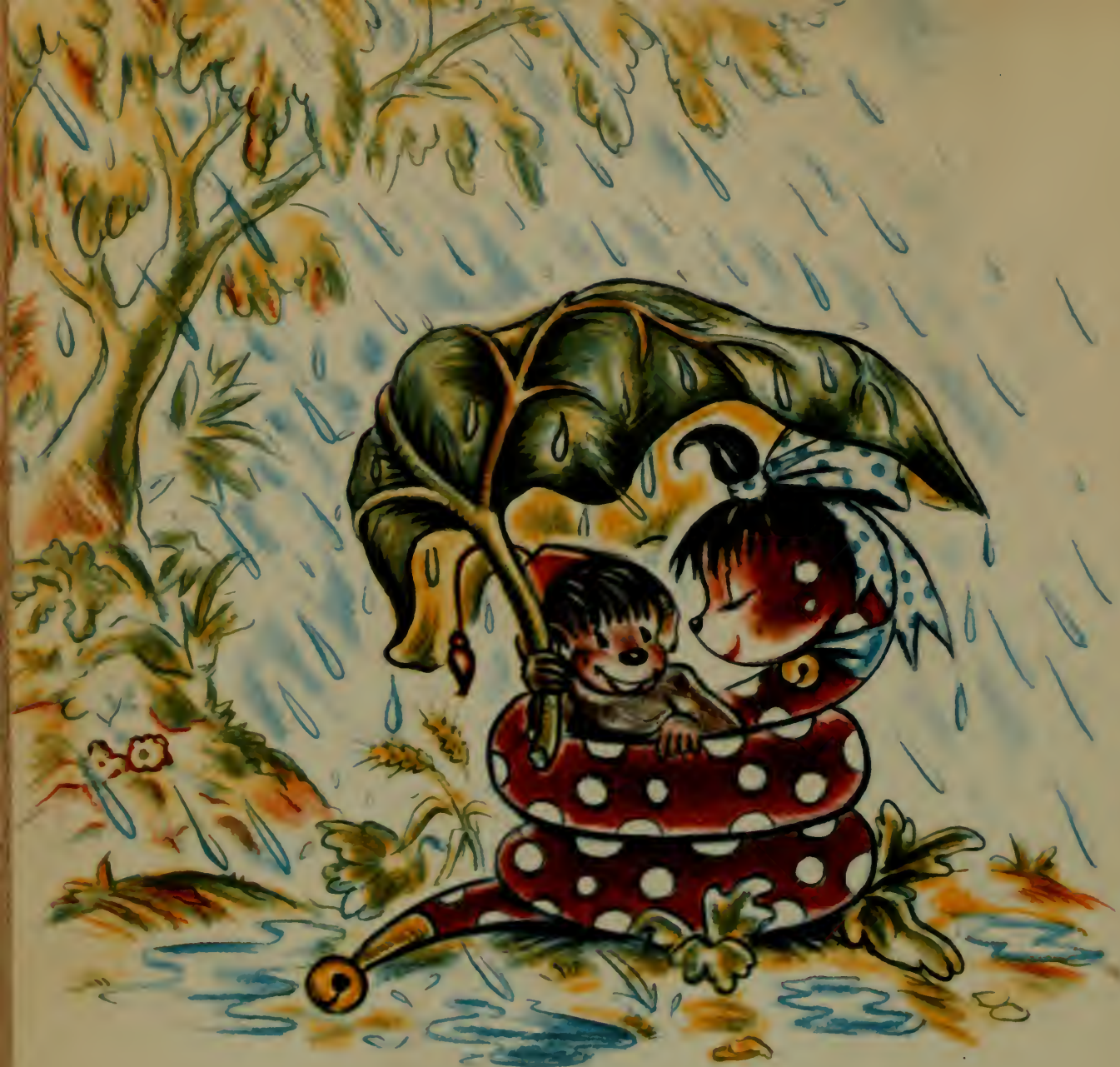
"This is a terrible place!" he said. "It's cold, and there's nothing much to eat and thorns and thistles everywhere, and the lake is full of alligators."

"I want to go home," he cried. "I want to go *home*—boohoo boohooo!"

Amanda tried her best to console him and as soon as he was dry they started on their way back. But they had barely reached the twin mountain peaks when they ran into a fierce thunderstorm! It just poured, and lightning crackled all around them.

"More trouble!" sighed Amanda. So, while Sir Archibald held a big elephant-ear leaf over





both of them, she wound herself around him.

Thus they kept nice and dry.

It rained and rained and rained all night long,
until the next morning. Just as they were peek-
ing at the blue sky from underneath their big



elephant-ear umbrella they saw somebody coming!

“Jiggers!” whispered Sir Archibald.

The steps came nearer and nearer and nearer until they stopped, right by them.

“Dear me,” whispered Sir Archibald, “I wish I could get out of here. This place is full of ants!”

Just then there was a knock. It was an ant-eater, who said very politely, “I beg your pardon, but the rain is over. Besides, you are sitting right on my favorite ant-hill. Would you kindly move over?”

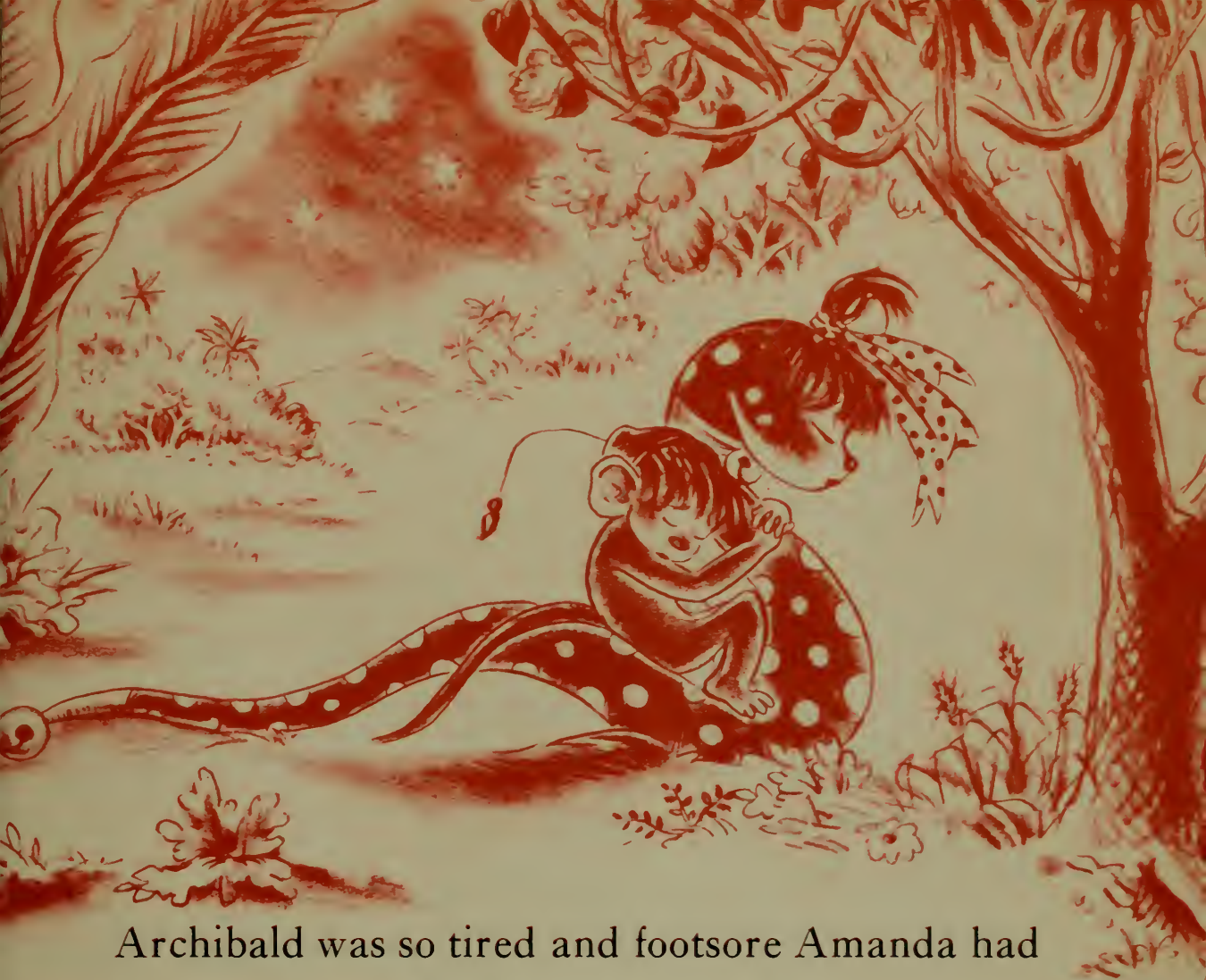


“With the greatest of pleasure,” said Sir Archibald as he scrambled out of Amanda’s sheltering coils. “We thought you were a bear. Eek! The ants are all over me and do they bite! Eek! Eek!”

“Just stand still,” said the ant-eater, and with his long tongue he picked off every one of them in a jiffy.



And then they were on their way home again. They traveled without stopping at all till the sun went down—until at last poor little Sir



Archibald was so tired and footsore Amanda had to carry him. Wasn't that nice of her?

Thus they finally came back to their flowering tree on the edge of the jungle.

"Well, thank *goodness!*" sighed Sir Archibald as they flopped into the cool green grass. "Isn't it wonderful to be back again?"

"Yes," said Amanda, "yes, indeed. *There is no place like home!*"



And then they cuddled close together and fell asleep, while all the bright, twinkly stars in the heavens above them smiled and silently nodded their little heads, for they had known that for a long time!

It was quite late the next morning when Sir Archibald drowsily rubbed his eyes and blinked at the sunny blue sky. Oh, it felt so good to be home again! He yawned and stretched himself and then he looked at Amanda. She was still asleep. At first he was going to wake her up but all of a

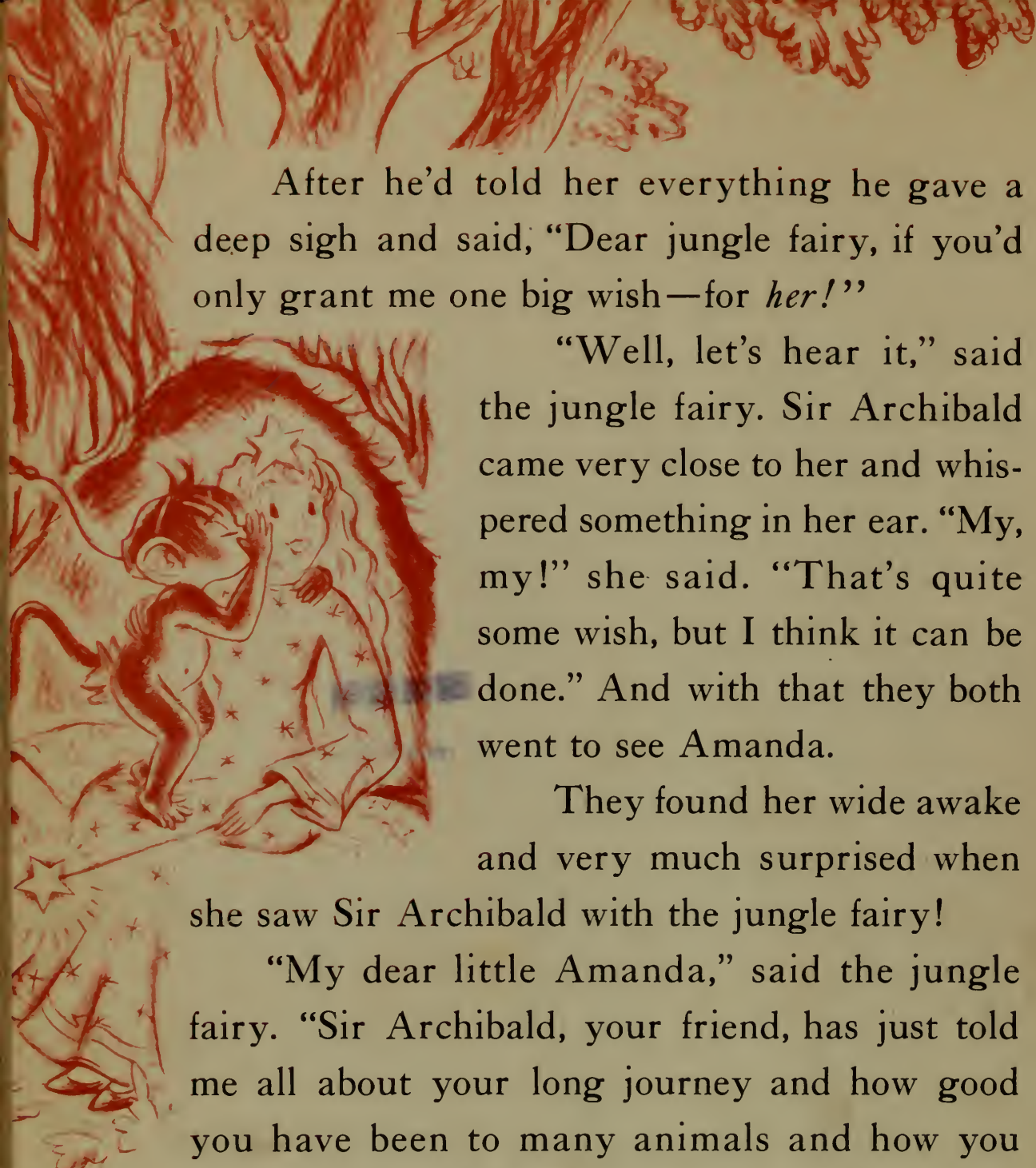
sudden he had an idea. A wonderful idea! What do you suppose Sir Archibald was up to? Can you guess it? Well, I'll tell you.

He got up quietly and tiptoed into the jungle, straight to the hollow tree where the jungle fairy lived. When she saw him she said, "Why, hello, little monkey, what can I do for you?"

"Oh, I don't want anything for myself," he answered, "it's for Amanda. You see, she saved my life!"

"She *did*? Please tell me all about it!" And then Sir Archibald told the jungle fairy about their journey to the Blue Lake and how good Amanda had been to the little skunks and the honey bear and the white monkeys. How she had saved him from the black old alligator, and how she had even carried him home.





After he'd told her everything he gave a deep sigh and said, "Dear jungle fairy, if you'd only grant me one big wish—for *her!*"

"Well, let's hear it," said the jungle fairy. Sir Archibald came very close to her and whispered something in her ear. "My, my!" she said. "That's quite some wish, but I think it can be done." And with that they both went to see Amanda.

They found her wide awake and very much surprised when she saw Sir Archibald with the jungle fairy!

"My dear little Amanda," said the jungle fairy. "Sir Archibald, your friend, has just told me all about your long journey and how good you have been to many animals and how you saved his life. Do you know what he has asked me to reward you with? Well, he wants me to give you some *hands* and *feet!*"

“Oh,” said Amanda. “Oh. That’s awfully sweet of him. I do appreciate it, I really do. But you see, if I had hands and feet I wouldn’t be a little snake anymore, and I *like* to be a little snake. And so, you see, if you don’t mind, I’d rather be just the way I am. But if I may have another wish . . .”



“You certainly may,” said the jungle fairy.

“Well,” said Amanda, casting her eyes down bashfully, “I’d just love to have a nice new hair ribbon!”

So *Xocha calla capetiltoots* gave Amanda



the biggest and most beautiful hair ribbon in all the jungle. And to Sir Archibald she gave a lovely



silver collar, for being so unselfish. Oh, they were so proud and happy. Just look at them!

But the naughty little bush pig got a good spanking for telling all those fibs about the Blue Lake. He certainly had it coming to him!

And that's the story of Amanda, the good little snake, and Sir Archibald, her friend. As far as I know they are still playing together on the edge of the green jungle, and are having lots and lots of fun!

